United Nations E/2005/SR.1

# Economic and Social Council

Provisional

31 January 2005

Original: English

**Organizational session for 2005**

**Provisional summary record of the 1st meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 19 January 2005, at 3 p.m.

*Temporary President*: Ms. Rasi ..... (Finland)
*President*: Mr. Akram ..... (Pakistan)

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05-21306 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

**Opening of the session**

1. **The Temporary President** declared open the organizational session for 2005 of the Economic and Social Council.

**Statement by the Temporary President**

2. **The Temporary President** expressed her thanks to the members of the Council for their hard work during a productive and successful year, in which the Council had been honoured by the highest level of representation from member Governments on various occasions.

3. She highlighted some of the Council's main accomplishments during 2004, beginning with the substantive session. At the high-level segment, the adoption of the action-oriented Ministerial Declaration had placed the concerns of developing nations firmly at the forefront of the international agenda. The coordinating segment had achieved further breakthroughs in gender mainstreaming and had played a key role in the integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences. The operational activities segment had successfully prepared the ground for the General Assembly's triennial comprehensive policy review, and the humanitarian affairs segment had affirmed the central role of the United Nations in response to humanitarian emergencies.

4. The general segment was in many ways the Council's main activity and had the potential to be more effective. In addition to its oversight and coordinating functions, it dealt with important policy decisions, including agreement on a smooth transition strategy for States graduating from the least developed countries (LDCs) list and the completion of negotiations on international cooperation in tax matters.

5. The mandates of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Haiti, respectively, had been renewed and reactivated, while the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi continued its work. Such Groups contributed to the understanding of issues of conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction in promoting sustainable development.

6. Aside from its main session, the Council had organized the special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the theme of increased coherence, coordinating and cooperation for implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the outgoing Bureau had already prepared the ground for the 2005 meeting. The contribution of non-governmental organizations had increased steadily both in quality and in quantity. The private sector had been involved in a number of new partnership initiatives, and its contribution was notable in such areas as financing for development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Efforts had been made to improve the Council's outreach with a view to achieving greater publicity for and recognition of its work.

7. The Council remained a resilient body open to change and a panel discussion had been held in May 2004 on issues pertaining to its reform. In addition, she had shared her ideas with the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and hoped that the Panel's report would be adequately discussed by the Council. It was important for the Council to function in the manner foreseen by the Charter of the United Nations. In her view, regular informal contacts with the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council would help to clarify the roles of those main bodies in their respective areas and their daily work.

8. The Council must continue to strive to become the multilateral strategic platform for the coordination of economic and social policies for the advancement of the common development agenda. It was not only an excellent meeting forum, but also a policy-making body. To that end, however, it was important to allocate sufficient human and financial resources for the functioning of the Council, which sometimes had to compete with the Second Committee or other economic and social activities of the United Nations that deprived the Council and its Bureau of services of its secretariat.

**Election of the President**

9. **The Temporary President** recalled that rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council provided that, in the election of the President of the Council, regard should be had for the equitable geographic rotation of that office among the regional groups. According to the order of rotation that the Council had been following, the President for 2005 should be a representative of the Group of Asian States. She had been informed that the Group had

nominated Mr. Munir Akram for the office of President.

10. *Mr. Munir (Pakistan) was elected President by acclamation.*

11. *Mr. Munir took the Chair.*

**Statement by the President**

12. **The President** said that the Council had registered significant results in 2004. In addition to those mentioned by the Temporary President, he recalled the series of round tables on topical trade and investment issues of concern to LDCs, with the participation of the heads of the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Also, a high level dialogue on key development policy issues had been convened with relevant stakeholders, and the Council had adopted resolution 2004/50 confirming its commitment to strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance.

13. In 2005, the Council must build on those achievements and respond to new challenges and opportunities. The greatest challenge to humanity and world peace was the failure to realize the Charter's vision of better living standards and greater freedoms. For some people, increasing prosperity was present or promised, but that was not the case for the majority. Over 1 billion people lived on less than a dollar a day, while another 2.7 billion struggled to survive on two dollars. Eleven million children died each year from preventable diseases, while 114 million did not attend primary school and 584 million women were illiterate.

14. In the globalized world, despite signs of economic fragility, the financial resources, technical means and feasible strategies existed to end hunger and poverty. The outpouring of generosity provoked by the tsunami of 26 December 2004 must be sustained and effectively utilized. Yet every day of every year, the poorest and most vulnerable people and nations were hit by equivalent tragedies. The Council must play a role in preventing the daily tragedies that killed women and children and left men hungry, humiliated and often angry. It must also support the victims.

15. In a year that would mark the review of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Organization, the Council must rally the global solidarity required to fulfil the commitments undertaken at the recent major development conferences and summits. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was a central part of the Council's agenda for the year, including at the high-level segment of its substantive session. The choice of themes for that segment and the coordination segments focused on the Goals and would complement the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit to take place at the high-level plenary meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly (the 2005 summit). As to the high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO, the first important step would be to choose sub-themes that were topical and relevant to the financing of development.

16. Using the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on the Millennium Declaration, to be submitted in March, and the report of the Millennium Project as the basis for consultations, he would work with the Bureau to develop recommendations for action by Member States and other stakeholders to advance towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other goals. The Council's input would enrich the preparatory process for the 2005 summit, whose major outcome must be a credible collective response to development.

17. Development had been recognized as the indispensable foundation of a new collective security system. That recognition must be reflected in the operational policies of States and international institutions. The Council could contribute significantly to those objectives and its close collaboration with the Security Council on the ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict was one operational manifestation of the close link between security and development and the need for coordination between the principal organs of the United Nations.

18. The Council had so far not been successful in fulfilling its role as the central organ of the United Nations system in the socio-economic sphere. However, if the international community wished to promote development as its highest priority, the Council would have to be empowered to promote coherence and coordination and the implementation by all relevant parties of their commitments.

19. Reform of the Council was one of the important institutional issues to be addressed at the 2005 summit. Incremental steps towards reform might include keeping the Council in continuous session, holding meetings to deal with emergencies such as the recent tsunami disaster, allowing the Council to deal with topical issues, and revival of the Group of 27 of the Group of 77.

**Election of the Bureau**

20. **The President** said that rule 18 of its rules of procedure provided for the Council to elect four Vice-Presidents. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Council wished to elect the candidates nominated by each regional group.

21. *Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Mr. Nesho (Albania), Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) and Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) were elected Vice-Presidents of the Council for 2005 by acclamation.*

22. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that 2004 had been an especially productive year for the Council, which had steadily asserted its role in addressing key economic and social development issues.

23. The high-level segment had helped to pave the way for a decision regarding the smooth transition of countries graduating from least-developed status. The coordination segment had successfully advanced a system-wide approach to the important issue of gender mainstreaming. The Council had conducted a thoughtful assessment of the work of the ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict and the reactivation of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and the continuing work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi had shown the great potential that existed for the United Nations to play a distinctive role in support of peacebuilding, security and development.

24. The 2004 special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization had confirmed that regular event as a milestone in building confidence and promoting dialogue on the issues covered in the Monterrey Consensus. In reaching agreement on the institutional framework for international cooperation in tax matters, the Council had made a further contribution to the follow-up process.

25. The outgoing President's efforts had helped the Council to improve stakeholder participation in its work, particularly non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the academic and scientific communities and the private sector, thereby enhancing the Council's image and impact.

26. The year 2005 would be a critical one, with both the Council and the Organization focusing on the 2005 Summit, which he hoped would promote closer international cooperation and strengthen the Organization itself. However, that hope would not be realized unless the Council improved the quality and depth of its contribution by taking as its point of reference the Millennium Declaration commitment to strengthen further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter.

27. The changes in the Council's working methods over the years marked the beginning of progress towards the role which the Charter and the Millennium Declaration had established for the Council. Strengthening of the Council's role was crucial to the overall strengthening of the Organization. Only the Council, however, could carve out and gather political support for such a role. Despite having pioneered the linking of integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences and to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Council had yet to play a distinctive role in assessing fulfilment of the development dimensions of the Declaration. During its high-level and coordination segments, the Council must work to translate into action the mandate given to it by the General Assembly to review progress towards implementation of all the commitments given in the Millennium Declaration and towards the integrated follow-up to the major global conferences.

28. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs would support the President and the Bureau in making 2005 the desired turning point for the Council and for international development cooperation.

29. **Mr. Bichler** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, paid tribute to the new and outgoing officers and said that the European Union would be a dedicated partner to the Council in the year ahead.

**Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters** (E/2005/1 and E/2005/2)

30. **The President** invited the Council to adopt the provisional agenda (E/2005/2).

31. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council) said that Greece had relinquished its seat on the Council and that the General Assembly had elected Spain to fill the unexpired portion of its term. As a result, Greece should be removed from the list of members of the Council for 2005 in the annex to the provisional agenda (E/2005/2) and replaced by Spain.

32. *The provisional agenda, as orally amended, was adopted.*

33. **The President** announced that, by adopting resolutions 1988/77 and 1989/114, the Council had decided to take certain measures designed to revitalize and improve its functioning. The General Assembly, in resolutions 45/264, 48/162, 50/227, 52/12 B and 57/270 B, had also approved measures to restructure and revitalize the Council.

34. On the basis of the guidelines set out in those resolutions, the Council would consider at its organizational session the provisional agenda for the organizational session for 2005 (E/2005/2) and the proposed basic programme of work of the Council for 2005 and 2006 (E/2005/1). In addition, the matters listed in the provisional agenda required the adoption of measures at the organizational session.

35. In conformity with the provisions of paragraph 2 (l) of Council resolution 1988/77, informal consultations would be held on the proposed basic programme of work and other organizational matters. On the basis of those consultations, the Bureau would submit recommendations to the Council at a future meeting.

36. Recalling that some of the issues listed in the provisional agenda (E/2005/2) had been deferred from the resumed substantive session of 2004, he requested the Council to continue its consultations with a view to completing their consideration. Furthermore, as the Council would be called upon to elect a new member of the Committee for Development Policy, he would consult the Bureau with a view to including the item in the Council's agenda for February 2005.

37. Turning to the question of seating arrangements for delegations, he proposed that, as in the past, lots should be drawn to determine which delegation would occupy the first seat.

38. The delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was selected to take the first seat.

*The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.*